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ABSTRACT

Traditional school systems do not develop in individuals the capacities for cooperation, struggle, autonomy, and judgment appropriate for exercising citizenship in a democratic society. Rather, schools go to extraordinary lengths to alienate youth from effective participation in the adult world. Community schools, on the other hand, reject the notion of a common school experience as the only valid training ground for political community and in its place propose many ways to acquire the individual intelligence and common values needed to perform the duties of citizenship. Traditional schoolrooms and professional educators should make up only one part of the total resources available to students. (Author/MLF)

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STEPS FOR SCHOOL REFORM:
AN AGENDA FOR EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL COMMUNITY*

James J. Shields, Jr.

Public discussion of education has all but ended. Where discussion does exist it is low-keyed, trivial, and perfunctory, similar in many ways to comments made in passing by casual acquaintances about the weather.

Popular intellectual journals such as the *New York Review of Books*, a major platform for celebrity school critics in the 1960's, rarely publishes articles on education now. Even *The New York Times*, which in its position as the daily newspaper of the nation's key policy makers often sets the topics for debate on educational issues, has reduced its coverage of education. Along with the civil rights movement, the counter-culture, and Vietnam, education has been withdrawn from the national consciousness.

Both the extent and the focus of public discussion mirror an era in education without vision, without spirit, and without celebrities. A.S. Neill and Paul Goodman are dead, Edgar Friedenberg is in Canada, Jonathan Kozol has switched his allegiance to farmworkers, and Ivan Illich is in "retreat." John Holt and Herbert Kohl remain, but their public is small and their book sales are even smaller.

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* Presidential Address, Annual Conference, American Educational Studies Association, Waldorf Astoria Hotel, N.Y., Nov. 1, 1974. James Shields is a professor at City College, City University of New York and author of numerous books and articles on education and social reform.

Most reformers of the 1960's have re-entered the system. The outrage and the ideals that originally moved them have been dissipated by personal and social conflict. Not only were the values they defended at odds with those of the prevailing institutions in America, more importantly, they conflicted with their own deepest and most personal hopes and ambitions. Like their antecedents in previous generations, the pressure to assume positions of authority in the very institutions they had criticized was more than they could resist.

Earlier this year, I received a letter from the founder of a radical educational newspaper and the organizer of five alternate schools. His letter is an account of his journey through resistence and change activities back to a place in the system where more cautious and conservative educators have always been. In part, the letter reads:

> I worked in the system for change, modified curriculum designs, new classes, humanistic education, university-without-walls, and the whole trip. I helped to establish five alternate schools, including one now famous alternate high school.
>
> I soon became very unhappy with what I saw developing on the "hip" fringe of the alternate school movement. It is as Jonathan Kozal says, a playground for the children of the fascists. And the children in alternate schools have disappointed me beyond explanation.
>
> In fact when I realized how terrible things were, I went into a state of manic depression and was hospitalized for two months in 1973. I have departed from the movement. However, I continue to teach -- $16,000 for twelve hours per week teaching, plus summers off!

Although public concern for educational problems has come to a virtual standstill, the problems remain. Ageism, Sexism, Racism, and Classism continue to work misery on all who are forced to go to school, for

however long, in whatever school they must attend and in whatever classes they must take.

Racism is easily the most blatant problem. It is significant that the survival rate in white high schools in New York City is almost twice as great as in minority schools. It is also significant that pupils in predominantly white schools achieve above grade level and those in predominantly minority group schools achieve below grade level.

There are two public school systems operating in New York City, one that teaches children how to read and one that does not. Instead of a normal bell-shaped curve along which a population of such magnitude should distribute itself, there are two distinct curves, showing that one group succeeds and one fails.

The group that succeeds does very well. It peaks at two and one half years above the national norm. The group that fails peaks at two and a half years below the national norm. Most of the children who read below grade level are black and Puerto-Rican and most who read above grade level are Anglo-white. What this shows is that the public funds advance the white middle class over other groups.

It is not a very complimentary picture: whites on the top, blacks and Puerto Ricans on the bottom. To paraphrase a slogan out of the women's liberation movement: "It is time for blacks and Puerto Ricans to get out from under whites."

There is much about this lopsided record that is perplexing, not the least of which is that it was attained under the most favorable working conditions for teachers in the nation. New York is the leader in low pupil-professional staff ratios: 15-5 compared to a national average of 19-5. New York has 9.6 percent of the nation's school staff for 7.6 percent of its public school enrollment.

Both teacher salaries and pupil expenditures are extremely high. The average salary for classroom teachers in New York City in 1970-1971 was $11,000, and for non-classroom professional personnel $17,264. These figures are substantially higher than the national average and the averages for major regions of the country.

The 1970-1971 per pupil expenditure for pupils in daily attendance averaged $1,370. This figure placed New York 63 percent above the national average, 64 percent higher than the average New England state, and 37 percent higher than other states in the mid-East region.

What we see in the statistics regarding failure in school achievement for blacks and Puerto Ricans is only the tip of the iceberg. An enormous number of children are being damaged beyond repair. The lethal aspects show up every day in stress diseases, in increased admissions to mental hospitals, and in a sharp increase in autism.

Senator Walter Mondale of Minnesota conveys a sense of the horror felt by many who are in touch with these problems in a statement he made in a Senate Report of the Select Committee on Educational Opportunity.

He said "We are mutilating the spirits of millions of American children every day and it surely is a sin."

From a sense of horror to an active search for appropriate solutions is a difficult and rarely satisfactory journey. For this reason, few take it. What follows is a review of some current proposals for educational change offered in the hope that the discussion will stimulate a larger public to join in the search for strong and effective measures for school reform.

The Preen As a Solution

A starling facing a difficult situation preens when there is neither the need nor a good cause for that kind of behavior. In these situations the bird experiences a simultaneous arousal to attack and to withdraw. It cannot do both; instead it preens, a reaction which is completely out of context, causally and functionally.

Two of the most widely embraced responses to public school failure, deschooling and career education, serve as good examples of the "preen."

Liberals: Romantic and Realist

Ivan Illich, the major proponent of deschooling, wants compulsory public schooling disestablished as the civic religion for American youth. Another proponent, John Holt, argues that schools should be like public libraries, movie theaters, and art galleries, simply there for people who want to use them.

Unfortunately, the brilliance and profundity these critics display in their description of schooling is not apparent in their discussion of alternatives. Because of this weakness liberal romantics Illich and Holt have been edged into history and replaced by liberal realist Christopher Jencks who argues that although schooling for poor children has little effect on their prospects for economic success, we should continue to reform our schools. Reform for Jencks does not consist of trying to make Harlem schools like those in Scarsdale, but in making all schools "pleasant" places to be.

Pleasant schools in an unpleasant society, like open classrooms in a closed society, offer very little in the way of relief to our thinking. Jencks' position is far removed from the vision offered by Horace Mann who saw in popular schooling "the balance wheel of the social machinery," and of John Dewey who viewed schoolrooms as tools for the liberal transformation of society.

Directly and unequivocally, Jencks has articulated for us the basic tradition that has come to dominate American schooling, what Alan Wolfe calls the "Reform without Reform" approach to social problems. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the entrenched school establishment, which at first had challenged with intense hostility Jencks' findings on the relationship between schooling and economic opportunity, now embrace Jencks as an ally.

In an article in an American Federation of Teachers' newspaper, The Reverend John Gill observes that our most important conclusion from Jencks' work is that education must be implemented for the sake of education,

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not as a devious way of solving social problems. Earlier in the article, Gill stated that his concern for civil liberties led him to wonder if perhaps symptoms may be the only thing society has the right to treat.

Happily or not, Jencks stands alongside Illich and Holt in the classic posture of arousal to attack and then withdrawal, the "preen."

Career Education

Liberal realism is a tipsy state in which individuals can be observed veering slightly to the left and then ever so slightly to the right and collapsing finally into a stupor of neo-conservatism.

Proposals for reform that at first appear to be liberal, upon inspection, often turn out to be reactionary. Career education, which was widely supported within the Nixon Administration because it promised to re-establish the work ethic in the American value system, is a good case in point.

Career education programs tend to idealize the world of work. They give the impression that all jobs are important and thus imply that society honors school crossing guards and doctors equally; workers in general are portrayed as satisfied with their work and its rewards. In all phases of these programs the knowledge of individual jobs in given more importance than the distortions and inequalities in the job market and the economic system.

Rarely is anything of critical importance taught. Pupils are not taught, for instance, that the decided trend toward more equal distribution of income in the United States has essentially halted since 1945 or that less than four percent of the people own the country.

Usually, pupils are misled regarding the possibilities vocational training programs offer them. According to a report published by the Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, post-high school vocational training programs, both public and private, which supposedly provide new educational services to new students instead maintain class and income inequalities.

The Supreme Court is very likely to emerge as the strongest force of all in advancing career education goals. In Griggs v. The Duke Power Co. (1971), the Court ruled unanimously that a company may not impose unrelated educational requirements as a condition for employment. The full implications are not clear, but presumably they would allow a company to require training in a useful discipline like accounting or engineering while possibly excluding superfluous requirements pertaining to other kinds of knowledge.

If we learned anything in the 1960's, it was that passion and acute theoretical understanding without special skills in law, medicine, and housing, for instance, have limited value for dealing with social problems. Equally, however, skill acquisition without passion and theoretical understanding is limited. Du Bois in an article he wrote for the *Colored American Magazine* in 1904 made a powerful statement in this regard: " ... education is not to make men carpenters, but to make carpenters men."

Career education, as inappropriate behavior, causally and functionally, for solving school problems is yet another example of the "preen." As such, it should be viewed with great caution by those who value education for individual development and social reform.

Education for Democratic Political Community

Right or left, all school critics seem to agree on the enormous power the school has to miseducate. Those on the left argue that the schools miseducate by fitting the young into alienating social, economic, and political structures. Those on the right, among whom James Coleman is an important spokesman, argue, on the contrary, that schools transform youth into irresponsible adults and outsiders.

In spite of their agreement on school failure, few critics find they are able to go as far in their proposals for reform as Ivan Illich who calls for a deschooled society. None can dismiss Illich entirely, however. His recommendations have compelled all critics to deal with the question of the purposes of schooling.

Eminent educational historian R. Freeman Butts says the primary reason public schools were established was to help create and maintain democratic political community. Popular schooling was established, he says, to prepare individuals to play a part in their political communities by giving them the understandings, the attitudes, and the skills necessary to make deliberate choices.

For this reason, the school critic must give primary attention to the political purpose of American education. The critic must explore our history to determine where the school has succeeded and where it failed in the development of democratic political communities. It is in these efforts, it seems to me, that the critic has the best chance for building a coherent plan for the reconstruction of public schooling.

An exploration into the purposes of schooling can easily bog down in a quagmire of conflict between the lofty and the earthy, the immediate and the long-term, and the dream and the reality. For this reason, a firm grasp on the twin concepts of the public school movement as ideology and as social institution is most important.

The nineteenth century faith that universal schooling will guarantee everyone economic and political equality is an important part of our cultural lore. It presents few problems on the level of ideology. However, it is an entirely different matter when the concept is examined in schools where actual students and teachers interact. A good sense of this divergence is captured in statements made by Charles Tesconi and Donald Warren at a recent meeting of the American Educational Studies Association in Denver:

> Thus when I say the school is important, I am not speaking of the school as it exists.
>
> The idea is great; if the school itself is not.

The difference between the public school movement as an ideology and as an institution is excellently demonstrated in the relative impact of John Dewey and Edward L. Thorndike upon the American school early in the century.

Although educators celebrated Dewey's ideas, when it came to practice they followed Thorndike and developed an educational system that was the very antithesis of Dewey's philosophy. Through the efforts of Thorndike and others, teachers learned to typecast students and to standardize the school process. Thorndike, a middle class conservative, symbolizes what American education has become today: a system which rewards children of the dominant mainstream culture.

Schools instead of helping to create and maintain democratic political community are a major means for violating it. Today, school systems do not develop in individuals the capacities for cooperation, struggle, autonomy, and judgment appropriate for exercising citizenship in a democratic society. Rather, schools go to extraordinary lengths to alienate youth from effective participation in the adult world.

Some argue that the goal of creating democratic political communities was never more than liberal rhetoric and that the public school as a social institution is absolutely consistent with the real purpose schools were intended to serve. Others argue that the ideology of democratic community was sincere, but was subverted by the corporate bureaucratic strucuures created to house it. Actually, it matters little which is true because there is something inherent in the nature and the ethos of bureaucratic organizations as they have evolved in America which grind all ideologies into the same product.

Schools, in common with other bureaucracies, "sanitize" and thereby impoverish the lives of people they touch. Not teachers and students alone, but editors in publishing houses, social workers, policemen, bank officials, department store clerks, stockbrokers, and janitors all feel isolated and find the possibilities for inviting personal relations and community limited.

Our social institutions have evolved into impersonal, dehumanized, and authoritarian systems which treat all individuals as if they were raw material on a production line in a factory. Constantly, the self is under assault. As Charles Reich said;

> The school is a brutal machine for the destruction of self, controlling it, heckling it, hassling it ... never giving it a minute to establish knowledge within ...

Every effort is made to fractionalize the organic wholeness of the self; thinking is separated from behavior, conceiving from making, sensation from intellect, and value from fact. And what is even more brutal, the natural response of protest for being denied self knowledge and organic wholeness is muted and submerged.

Learning and work which do not allow individuals to express themselves seem to have an inner logic that impels them to become increasingly self-indulgent and to desire and to practice private consciousness. Increasingly, capital, goods, and services are sought in the place of healthy community. Inevitably, alienation results, and individuals find they have become something less than they had intended.

The public school as a social institution promises political community, but delivers instead docility and subordination to what is. Public schools work against democratic community; they are sources of our social problems. What is needed is action to build educational programs that are solutions, not sources of our problems.

The task of transforming schools begins in social criticism, but does not end there. As Gintis states, "Negation is not itself a form of liberation. Action lies not in the act of negation, but in the act of overcoming." Pure negation is not only incomplete, it is dangerous as well. Often it makes problems appear so complex that directed solutions are out of the question.

It is very easy to marshal arguments for dismissing the school as a place to work for a reformed world. However, the mere fact that schools exist and will continue to exist is argument enough that they are important places in which to understand, feel, and act upon the contradictions

in our society.

We must encounter people where they are; at this moment in history they are in schools. The challenge then is in the schools and it requires each of us to join step by slow step in what Rudi Deutchke calls the "long march" toward a radically altered vision of day-to-day social relations, including localized struggles for participatory, decentralized, and organically whole learning techniques.

Toward a Solution

We are removed in time and power from the early days of the public schools when boards of education set policy, examined teachers, and scanned textbooks. Control of education has passed out of the hands of lay boards and into the hands of bureaucracies. Today, schools function as service agencies to the dominant bureaucracies of our society. As with many other institutions, the ideology of another era is used to justify a set of relationships whose reality actually contradicts the myth.

This situation is not likely to change until parents, students, and the public organize into unions, go on strike and involve themselves in politics with others who share their conditions and goals. An early order of business, it seems to me, is to challenge present teacher certification requirements which exclude many competent teachers and do not guarantee the quality nor the ability of those certified to teach.

Professionally processed teachers are not the only people who can help do what parents fail to do, nor are they necessarily the best choice. Research findings reported by a leading proponent of specific performance

objectives in teacher education provide an interesting case in point. Popham found that experienced teachers performed no better than college students in teaching social science, and tradesmen did about as well as experienced teachers in teaching auto mechanics and electronics.

The Community School

Early public school advocates tended to view the true American as representative of Anglo-Saxon values and to regard cultural diversity as a threat to the Republic. An important chronicler of American schooling, E.P. Cubberly, writes that immigrants were looked upon as:

> Illiterate, docile, lacking in self-reliance and initiative and not possessing the Anglo-Teutonic conception of law, order, and government. Their coming was thought to dilute tremendously our national stock and to corrupt our civil life.

The common school concept was built on a view of society in which ethnicity, religion, and race were only incidental characteristics. The reality is that individuals are molded substantially by a wide range of communities of varying degrees of organization and self-consciousness and with different histories and cultures. The demand for community control, the failure of integration, and the suburban school all provide recent and strong testimony of how wrong the early schoolmen were.

As early as 1915, Horace Kallen disavowed Anglo-conformity as unworthy of America. Kallen insisted that by extension, democracy for the individual also means democracy for the group. To redress the injustice done to diverse racial, cultural, regional, ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups in the public schools, a community school concept should be implemented to supplement the common school concept.

A community school is based on choice and shared commitment. As such, it is meant to replace the concept of one school for every neighborhood. It is an educational facility where the program grows out of the life of the community it serves. Groups, which seem to value and are desirous of building a community, for instance, blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Chicanos, would be encouraged in their efforts and protected from white, liberal, middle class reformers who are determined to stamp them with an Anglo mainstream identity.

"Community" is used mostly in a geographic or ethnic sense. There are other, broader definitions, however. There is the approach which takes the form of interested persons coming together to cultivate their shared concern for a set of problems and to organize for the effective pursuit of them. This kind of community is an alternative to a strictly geographical or ethnic community. These communities at their best would employ an individual's deepest powers. As such, they would provide an excellent basis for developing a school program.

Another variation of the community school is reflected in any effort to broaden the range of teaching styles and content offered to fit student and parental interests. The possible alternatives are immense: a school with permissive and student-centered practices, another with drill, order, and tight discipline; a school with academic classes similar to those offered by universities and another which segregates students by sex; a school which places physical development at the center of the curriculum, and so on.

An early and valuable step in the direction of implementing the community school concept is the introduction into existing schools of a full range of options which reflect student and parental interest. Primarily, what is at

issue here is the availability of real options and true choice, not separate facilities.

Community schools are an important means for restoring multiple options to each individual in our society. They reject the notion of a common school experience as the only valid training ground for political community. In its place, they offer the principle that there are many ways to acquire the individual intelligence and common values required to perform the duties of citizenship in a democratic state.

The community school is organized around private interests, but it is public in purpose. For this reason, it cannot cater to minorities in ways that are simply a pretext for protecting established elites. The community school concept represents an effort to re-establish a balance between the public and private by strengthening each subcommunity in the total polity.

Schools in a democracy have a responsibility to be allies of difference. This requires schools where individuals are encouraged to choose for themselves and which defends individuals against inauthentic authority, whether it resides in a crowd, a machine or a bureaucracy.

Unfortunately, schools as they function today are ill-equipped to realize democracy's goals. By forcing all individuals to adapt to one system as a prerequisite for decent employment, large segments of the population have been effectively disenfranchised. A recent report issued by the Children's Defense Fund charged that the nation's public schools have systematically excluded more than two million children. The Fund's director, Marion Wright Edelman, reported that if a child is not white or

is white and is not middle class, does not speak English, is poor, needs special help with seeing, hearing, walking, reading, learning, adjusting, growing up, is pregnant, or married at age 15, is not smart enough or is too smart, then, in many places, school officials decide that school is not the place for that child.

For education to expand rather than constrict, men must be free to choose among a broad range of real options, including the option not to use school at all. It is one of the paradoxes of our time that schooling, considered to be a liberating force, in actuality, promotes the devastation of so many.

The cumulative effect of the existing pattern of public schooling inevitably has to bring us to what O.W. Markley calls "friendly fascism," a managed society ruled by a faceless and a widely dispersed complex of warfare -- welfare, industrial and communications police bureaucracies.

Fortunately, institutions are man-made and can be changed; new agendas can be introduced. As Markley tells us, we can save democracy if we are willing to replace values related to bureaucratic efficiency, consumption and exploitation with the goals of growth in personal and collective wisdom. But to realize this vision, we have to become an experimenting society which truly fosters a variety of new institutions and life styles.

Broadening Education Outside the School

The new generation of educators is questioning the concept of a single institution charged with dispensing education. Reform for them goes beyond simply broadening the options available within existing schools. They believe it is essential to abandon the deeply ingrained dichotomies and to think in terms of a variety of alternatives, not mutually exclusive, which would

include not only the established public school movement, but others, private and unsystematic.

The public school movement has become fat, wasteful, and inefficient. More than half the total recent growth in all public employment has come from the hiring of new teachers, college instructors, and other educational workers. The biggest factor in the growth of public employment has been a 72 percent increase in the number of public educational employees from 3.4 million in 1963 to 5.9 million ten years later.

The New York State Board of Regents recently publicized a study that found that liberal arts colleges repeat about 40 percent of the content of high school courses in the social sciences, 35 percent in English, 24 in science, and 21 percent in mathematics. On the basis of these and similar findings, the Regents have recommended that schools take steps to avoid unnecessary duplication by creating more work study and field experience programs for academic credit.

The Regents are asking that we redefine what we mean by educational resources and that all institutions that educate be recognized. In this regard, Lawrence Cremin in an interview shortly after his appointment as President of Teachers College, Columbia University said:

> I think we are going through a revolution that may be as radical as the original invention of the school. Television now is in 90 percent of our homes and is being watched on an average of six hours a day, mainly by the very young, the very old, and the very poor. People are learning knowledge, values and taste from T.V.

From very much less than what it costs to buy, store, and distribute irrelevant, ineffective and dishonest textbooks, thousands of small, independent, local television and radio stations could be established and

operated by learners and for learners. The 1,350 families who reside in Park Towers, an apartment complex in the New York City borough of Queens, are able to watch TV shows produced nightly within the apartment complex. The programs reach TV sets through a master antenna system which was installed and is maintained at very little cost by a firm which specializes in antenna systems.

For less than what it costs to build a classroom, a multilith press and associated equipment could be put into each neighborhood to make it possible for people to produce their own newspapers. Mini-libraries in storefronts or in converted trucks, community theaters, small offices for neighborhood renewal, miniature laboratories for science and invention, skill centers for trades, and craft workshops could be funded with the budget now used for security guards, truant officers, and other para-military staff in our schools. All of these and many more potentially strong learning and democratic community-building enterprises could easily be initiated with the more than five million dollars the National Association of School Security Directors in Washington, D.C. reports that school crime costs each year.

Aside from their value for learning, all of these enterprises hold great promise as viable alternatives to the monopolies on information dissemination now held by large newspapers, mass circulation magazines, and publishing empires. The reach of these educational and intellectual corporations is incredible. For instance, among the acquisitions of Macmillan, Inc. between 1959 and 1969 were the Macmillan Company, America's fourth largest book publisher; the LaSalle Extension University, a correspondence school; the Berlitz School of Languages; the Katherine Gibbs School, a secretarial school; Brentano's, the retail book chain; and G. Schrimer, the music publisher.

There is nothing inevitable or irreversible about the form public schooling has assumed in the United States. Conceivably, it could have taken other forms. Public schools could have become supplementary agencies like libraries or they could have become coordinating agencies that guide students into educational experiences that already exist and work to create educational experiences where they do not exist in the wide range of economic, cultural, and political institutions in our society.

A case can be made that when Thomas Jefferson designed his three year public school system it was necessary to create a single, new educational system because there was no one institution that was able and willing to catechize all young persons in the democratic system. However, today we have many institutions in wide public use other than the school which convey common ideas, sentiments and skills, political, practical, and otherwise.

Our present educational system forces all learners into prescribed curricula, identical assignments, and standardized testing. The needs of each individual differ and change throughout life and these needs encompass many more experiences than those which can be realized in schools. What is needed is a system which provides many publicly financed learning options within and outside the regular school system with many points of entry and exit throughout the life span.

Traditional schoolrooms and professional educators should comprise only one part of the total resources available to students. Learners should have the opportunity to study in small community newspaper offices, factories, consumer research groups, government agencies, urban renewal programs, museums and television studios as well as classrooms and to learn from

scientists, farmers, social workers, retired craftsmen, musicians, and writers as well as teachers.

Each student should have a specially tailored learning program designed to fit his unique needs and desires. Local boards of education should become "brokers" for their students. These boards would assess student needs and call upon local, regional, national, and worldwide resources to satisfy them. Through contracts with public and private individuals and agencies, boards of education could arrange for students to study where and with whom their needs required.

Obviously, we must relinquish the redundant and archaic concept of a common school experience for all and of public school as the single institutional route to the achievement of basic educational needs. We must redefine the work and the structure of public education to bring it closer to the needs of twentieth century man.

Ageism

Age is widely used as the basis for discrimination in education. It determines who must attend school and who is denied schooling; it determines which schools people attend, which classes and courses they take, and which civil liberties they enjoy. It is responsible for the separation of children and youth from each other and from adults. Also, it is used as a basis for denying children, youth, and adults the right to choose academic and vocational endeavors which match their interests at times in their lives when they desire them.

The resolution of the problem of ageism requires the abolition of schools as places restricted to people of a particular age. Children, youth, and adults must be reunited as learners in-school and out-of-school. Secondly, it requires the development of educational systems which provide

all individuals who need to learn and want to learn with the opportunity to do so throughout their lives.

In this regard, Ivan Illich's proposal for edu-cards makes a great deal of sense. It is based on the notion that delayed learning is preferable to external motivation and manipulation of those not eager to learn when they are young. Under his plan, those who delay learning would accumulate educational entitlements for later use.

A more comprehensive version of this plan would establish lifetime educational accounts with credit accrued to each person in annual installments. Unused educational credit would accumulate in the account for use whenever an individual desired further education of a formalized nature.

Participatory Democracy

The goal of education for democratic political community requires more than cracking credentialing procedures for teachers, reaching beyond the common school ideal to community schools, broadening the range of public educational options outside public schooling, and ending age discrimination and segregation in schools. It requires the development of educational experiences where individuals actually experience what it means to be a self-governing citizen in a self-governing community.

Our political commitments require that students, teachers, and administrators be given the opportunity to participate in decisions which affect them. In this way, learning becomes a means by which the democratic ideal is assimilated through practice and schools become conduits toward self-government in the society as a whole.

The vanguard of reform for those who value democracy is in any effort which balances the patterns of power in our society. In schools this means the re-ordering of social relations so that there is conscious struggle, cooperation, and control among students, teachers and administrators, and other educational workers. Without these efforts, the alienation which reinforces statis in the social order will continue and little that is destructive in our society will be altered.

No political system can be applied indefinitely without inviting totalitarianism. Although participatory democracy offers promise as an effective antidote to political despotism, there are limits to its application which must be recognized and respected. In the culture at large and in education in particular, there are many matters that do not require indivisible, collective decisions. If fundamental humanistic values are to be maintained, guarantees must exist in these matters to decide individually what we want. Simply, the answer is in the balance not the extremes; the twin goals are individual development and social order, the one personal, the other political, but *both* important.

This kind of change is difficult to achieve. When the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) was established, a primary purpose was the development of community action programs. These efforts ran into trouble very early and vast amounts of money which had been allocated to community action were redirected to more politically neutral activities such as Project Headstart. The dynamics of this strategy was to redefine efforts to do something about poverty through political and economic intervention into efforts that were analogous to treating cancer with aspirin.

Nonetheless, the notion of participatory democracy is not an idle utopian dream. Many communities have attained it: the New England town, the Dutch village, the moderate sized cities of Mali, and the desert communities of Djerba in Tunisia. The challenge to the new generation of educational reformers is to find ways to add the large American city, the small hamlet, the bedroom suburbs, indeed every community across the nation to this list so that those fragile commodities, education and reform, can become sources of nourishment, not destruction, for twentieth century man.

Epilogue

Eighteen years ago I stepped into my first classroom in a public school. My pupils were black, poor, and in pain. They were victims, I was a victim and all of us were in deep shock. The school was a jungle, my classroom was a snake-pit, and mere survival was all any of us learned that tortured year. Gradually, I became aware that the jailer is imprisoned along with the jailed; I left to work in teacher training and to confront racism and exploitation directly in the community.

Quite unexpectedly, from conflict in the classroom and the community, the struggle moved within. Along with such contemporaries as Herbert Kohl, whose personal quest is beautifully documented in *Half the House*, I found myself on an open and difficult journey into myself.

The identity I had assumed along the way was full of contradictions. Longer hair and blue jeans worked together now as well as short hair and gray flannel trousers had worked earlier. However, the new sense of the self as represented in clothing, life style, and values involving love, leisure, nature, and spiritual growth clashed dramatically with the older consciousness

of the poor and the oppressed.

Social reform activities generate compulsive work habits and a business style, all of which diminish the possibilities for personal development as defined by Consciousness III. The call of the 1960's was to be at one and the same time a Francis of Assisi and an Ignatius Loyola. The truth is that few have been able to do justice to either call, let alone both.

Long before I was able to resolve this conflict which somehow left noble purpose looking like vaulted ambition, I developed an even deeper conflict over my feelings about those who were to be helped. Rather than true understanding and selfless concern, my real feelings were closer to: "What is wrong with these people? Why can't they mobilize themselves and follow me in the 'long march' through institutions?" As one commentator on reform activities of the 1960's observed, the enigma is that so many people who should receive so little from society should believe so deeply in it.

The reality is that schools have been remarkably successful. They have trained the young to be passive, obedient, and alienated. In one of his later works, Abraham Maslow suggests that perhaps the demands of humanistic psychology may have been higher than anticipated and may involve "inhumanity" to the vulnerable who are unable to assume responsibility. The world, he concluded, is not peopled by adults. It has its full share of the permanently immature.

The paradox, as Kohl suggests, is that the advance toward wholeness and directness in human affairs appears to necessitate efforts that include power games, manipulation and hypocrisy. Unfortunately, I find it as difficult to integrate this insight into my visions for human dignity and a healthy society as I have in trying to imagine building a house on quicksand.

As the self-awareness and struggle continued, I found myself face to face with my Eastern, Irish Catholic, and urban roots. It is a tradition that carries with it a strong belief in the importance of the combative posture to hold ground, let alone move forward, and an almost mystical sense of the purification struggle holds.

The public school was never friendly to the Irish. In fact, the promise it held for them was the brutalization of their beliefs. With good justification, the Irish found public schools alien and walked out on them to establish a system more responsive to their needs. Mostly, however, they turned to non-school agencies, the church, the political club, and small neighborhood businesses to achieve the American dream.

Obviously, reforms involving the creation of community schools and the broadening of the range of educational options beyond public schooling carry with them a great deal of logic for anyone out of an Irish Catholic background. The troubling question this awareness raises is: "How far does this logic extend beyond a single ethnic and religious group?"

The answer, it seems to me, rests in the understanding that there is no final solution to all human problems. Social systems are bound to be incomplete. Therefore, room must always be made for competing systems. The public school and its core concept, the common school, rest on the assumption that one institutional form can meet all learning needs. The community school concept accepts difference as a basic right and provides a basic structure to achieve it.

The journey into myself has been instructive on many levels. It has

made it uncomfortably clear that social activism for many is little more than an exercise to avoid the resolution of personal problems. Wilhelm Reich's observations on the liberal personality type provide an interesting case in point. Liberals involved in educational reform activities tend to use the intellect as the sole outlet for expression. In the process, mental pursuits are emphasized and defensive action is taken against emotional release.

As a result, liberals lose touch with whole areas of themselves and turn more and more to the the outside world for security. The outcome is what Elsworth Baker, Reichian analyst, calls "emotional plague" which expresses itself in bureaucracy, striving for authority over others, sadistic treatment of children, and the destruction of natural feelings whenever they surface.

School systems restructured through community schools, contract education, and participatory democracy have limited potential unless the individuals who serve these new systems are restructured as well. Social and educational revolutions cannot take place without personal revolutions.

The internal and the external world must change simultaneously if a reconstituted society is to develop. Self-analysis must accompany societal analysis and self-reconstruction must accompany social reconstruction, for finally, it is in the synthesis of these twin efforts that the building materials for a more humane world can be found.

The challenge involved is as difficult as it is necessary. To borrow an analogy Herbert Kohl uses, it is very much like rebuilding a ship on the open sea. We can only rebuild the ship with the material we have on board or with

things we can pull out of the ocean. Piece by piece the ship has to be rebuilt until it looks different and sails better. If we rebuild too suddenly or too ambitiously, we might sink overselves. And if we are to rebuild without thought, we might create a modern version of the ship of fools.

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